

March 13, 2012

Testimony to support collective bargaining
In Support of Senate Bill 352

My name is Naomi Mitchell. I've been a licensed daycare provider in the Hartford area for 17 years and I am writing today in support of S.B.352. I am unable to attend the public hearing, but would like my voice to be heard.

I'm a professional provider, not a babysitter. I'm required to meet the same standards as child care centers. My home meets the same safety standards as any child care center would.

I take pride in my job as well as my children. I teach them the things necessary for them to enter into kindergarten, if I have them before they are school aged.

I live in a low income area and most of my parents depend on help with childcare. This means that a child may come and go without me receiving any pay. I have been dealing with processing paperwork through the state for over 15 years, first through the Department of Social Services, then Maxima and now Care4Kids and each one has gotten worse than the other. No parent should have to wait 2 or 3 months to know if they qualify for help or a daycare provider wait to be paid. It puts stress on the parents as well as on the daycare providers.

Two years ago my home went into foreclosure due to the inefficiency of Care4Kids and the late checks I received. It was not easy to explain to the mortgage company how you work so hard and get paid so little, at no given time.

As a daycare provider, my bills have due dates, and not paying my bills on time affects my job. Care4Kids should at least think of this when they are processing applications and look at each application as a person, a family, not just paper. In the year of 2011, I submitted three new parental applications. For each, I was forced to let the family go and I never received payment.

Changes need to be made. Applications need to be processed no later than two weeks after C4K receives them. Invoices for payment should be processed daily, and not only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Care4Kids employees need to be better trained and perhaps better paid.

That's why I support forming a contract with Care4Kids, to make these improvements. Please support collective bargaining and vote YES for SB 352.

Naomi Mitchell
Hartford, CT